



Net Neutrality

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Position Statement:

The State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council supports the proposed legislation that would mandate that all telecommunication and internet service providers offering their services in the state of Iowa adhere to the standards of an "open internet."

Position

It is the Position of the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council, the voice of the young people of Iowa, that (INSERT BILL NAMES HERE), a bill that would mandate that all telecommunication and internet service providers offering their services in the state of Iowa adhere to the standards of an "open internet," by preventing service providers from prioritizing certain internet services or apps over others (by means of blocking or deliberately slowing browsing speeds), banning the practice of paid prioritization of internet traffic, and barring the engagement in other practices that harm internet openness.

Rationale

Internet Service Providers (ISPs) have long been some of the most vitally important and useful companies in the world. They are the institutions that provide both individuals, private ventures, educational institutions, and governmental organizations with the ability to access internet without unreasonable fees for use. People have come to expect that when using services provided by ISPs, they are to be afforded the general right to equal connection speeds, unlimited access to legal websites, and individual control of viewable content. These are all rights guaranteed by the FCC under the current rules regarding net neutrality. However, those rights are currently under review by the FCC, and if removed as is expected, could have major impacts on the state of Iowa.

The first way Iowa would be affected lies in the realm of innovation. Both large and small companies that use ISP companies to promote and innovate business have been threatened by a potential repeal of the federal net neutrality rule. Concerns have been raised about the impact of net neutrality on innovation, something that was specifically addressed in *Verizon Communications Inc. v. FCC*, stating that "...[the] court upheld the Commission's finding that Internet openness drives a 'virtuous cycle' in which innovations at the edges of the network enhance consumer demand, leading to expanded investments in broadband infrastructure that, in turn, spark new innovations at the edge." This means that when open internet is available, innovation flourishes. If Iowa were to pass a law protecting the access to open internet, it would stand out as a harbor for innovation in an increasingly digital age.

Iowa consumers of the internet have unlimited access to legal online services, extending the important freedom of expression valued in our American democracy. The case on *Verizon Communications Inc. v. FCC* once again reflects that the removal of net neutrality protections has the potential for large ISP companies "to deceive consumers, degrade content, or disfavor the content that they don't like." Again, by creating an open internet in Iowa, we better our ability to ensure our citizens and resident businesses have access to a platform on a level playing field and living up to our values of equal opportunity for all. The issue with equal opportunity has raised concern for many people in regard to equal

treatment.

When ISPs have the ability to prioritize traffic for certain websites and apps, they can then charge each website for data prioritization. This would allow a website's users to browse at high speed on that particular site. However, high speed comes at a high price. Many small business owners rely heavily on their websites and the websites of other large companies like Facebook, to garner traffic. Paying a premium for high-speed access isn't likely in the budget of small business owners. This lowers traffic on their websites and hurts a business's ability to bring in profit. The new budgetary concern isn't limited to being felt only by small businesses. Consumers will likely feel the hardest hit, as it is plausible that new fees incurred by businesses will be passed directly onto the consumer.

Not only are small, independent businesses and consumers negatively affected by a repeal of net neutrality, but large and online businesses are also at risk of harm. The Internet Association, an organization compiled with some of the most success companies today, has come out in favor of net neutrality. The impact of a commitment by Iowa to maintain net neutrality would be felt by these large companies at a time where Iowa is increasingly becoming the home of massive corporate investments in data centers and could further incentivize future investment in our state.

Recommended Action

The State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council recommends that the Iowa Legislature pass a bill that would comprehensively protect Iowa small businesses and consumers by requiring the fair and equal treatment of all internet traffic as detailed in the position section of this document. The passage of this law would determine that in the face of a potential repeal of FCC rules regarding net neutrality, it is in the best interest of small businesses, large corporations, and every day Iowans that the internet be a fair and open forum.

Sources

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